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A Note From Your Member of Congress

Dear Neighbor,

It is a privilege to represent you. Below, you will find information about our work last month in Washington, D.C. and here in the district. Please reach out to my office if you need help or want to share your opinion on the crucial issues facing our country and community. We are also seeking interns and submissions for the Congressional Art Competition.

But before we get to the valuable information below, we must talk about the Parkland school shooting.

Last month, our state and our country experienced a tragedy. A man who never should have had a gun walked into a high school and brutally murdered 17 children and educators.

I am deeply upset that we keep having this conversation without taking any action. We have had so many mass shootings, and here in Orlando we still deeply feel the hurt of the Pulse nightclub shooting. Yet Congress has not taken any meaningful action on gun safety.

I am so proud of the young survivors who have created a national conversation around gun safety. They have bravely declared what should be obvious to all of us: that **every American should have the right to go to school, to church, to a mall or a movie theater or a nightclub, without being brutally murdered by someone with a gun.**

We do not have to live—and die—as if this was normal.

As a former law enforcement officer, my job was to enforce our laws and protect innocent people. As Members of Congress, our job is to create new laws to protect innocent people. In the months ahead, I will continue to speak out as we work to build safer, stronger communities.

Sincerely,

Val B. Demings

Val Demings

U.S. Representative, Florida's 10th Congressional District

Your Representative at Work

Gun Violence

Congress is long-overdue on real solutions to combat gun violence. As some of the Parkland shooting's survivors told me, **it is time to act.**



Congresswoman Demings meets with a group of student survivors of the Parkland school shooting to discuss their experience and gun safety priorities.

Last year, I cosponsored the [Gun Violence Restraining Order Act](#). This law would give family members of troubled individuals the ability to go to the police and obtain a restraining order to temporarily separate them from their deadly weapons. If a loved one is threatening suicide, or threatening an attack like the Parkland shooter did, law enforcement should have the ability to disarm them. That's just common sense.

After 27 years in law enforcement, I have seen every side of the gun issue. Here are some steps we should take next to protect our communities:

- Ban assault weapons like the ones used in the Parkland and Orlando shootings.
- Ban bump stocks, silencers, and other modifications that make guns deadlier in a mass shooting.
- Raise the age limit on rifles to 21, the same as handguns.
- Close the loopholes in the background check system and require a background check for every gun sale.

- Ignore ridiculous distractions like arming our teachers.

Below, you can click to see me speak before Congress on the issue of gun safety:



Rep. Demings speaks before Congress on the need to protect our families from gun violence.

National Prayer Breakfast

Last month I was given the extraordinary honor of delivering the closing prayer at this year's [National Prayer Breakfast](#). The event, attended by President Trump, Members of Congress, world leaders, and an audience of thousands of people of every faith, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

As the *Orlando Sentinel* [wrote](#), I "thanked God for protecting the first family and Republican House Whip Steve Scalise, who is recovering after being shot at congressional baseball game practice in April and who gave the keynote address."

You can see my prayer [here](#):



Rep. Demings delivers the closing prayer at 2018 National Prayer Breakfast.

'Black Panther' and STEM

I was excited to join Rep. Cedric Richmond, the Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, for a viewing of the new film 'Black Panther.' We discussed the importance of representation in media for children of color. Last year I hosted a workshop on cultural heritage and STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math—which included a viewing of a short section of this film. This year, we got to view the whole thing.

This film is a chance for young girls and boys to imagine a bigger world, where people who look like them rule nations and excel in fields of math, science, and technology.

Throughout February, we celebrated Black History Month, because we cannot celebrate American history without celebrating black history. It's up to us to ensure that children of color have a place in America's future as well.

Election Security

Our democracy is under attack. Russia targeted the 2016 election in at least 21 states, including Florida. Last month I and other Members of the Congressional Task Force on Election Security released a [report](#) and new [legislation](#) (The Election Security Act) to secure America's election infrastructure and prevent future interference in our democracy.



Rep. Demings speaks at a press conference unveiling a new plan to secure American elections.

Meeting with Government Workers

I had the pleasure to speak with members of the American Federation of Government Employees and National Treasury Employees Union. These organizations represent thousands of American workers who keep us safe, prosperous, and free.

Orlando International Airport has had constant shortages in its federal Customs and Border Patrol staff. I have cosponsored the 'Border and Port Security Act' to hire hundreds of new officers and make sure that our airports are secure and efficient.





Rep. Demings discusses legislation to protect federal employees at NTEU.



Rep. Demings discusses the critical role of federal employees at AFGE.

See some of what I said here:



Rep. Demings discusses the important job of unions to defend the rights of working people.

Meeting with America's Sheriffs

Last month, the Major County Sheriffs of America had their annual meeting. As a former Police Chief and a member of the Committees on Judiciary and Homeland Security, I was invited to speak to the group. We discussed the important work Congress is doing to support local law enforcement and secure our communities. This was also a wonderful chance to see Sheriff Demings here in Washington!



Rep. Demings speaks to the Major County Sheriffs of America about law enforcement and homeland security priorities.



Rep. Demings speaks with Sheriff Demings and other attendees about law enforcement issues.

Learning from Community and Law Enforcement Leaders

I met with Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw and with community advocacy group Friends of the Children. Operating out of Portland, Oregon, they are doing extraordinary work to keep at-risk youth in school, out of jail, off drugs, and into a successful adult life. This is the type of community engagement that I championed as Orlando's Police Chief. By focusing on communities and children, we can build safer, more prosperous communities for all of us.



Rep. Demings spoke at Rep. Blumenauer's Annual Women's lunch and met with Friends of the Children about strategies for youth engagement programs.



Rep. Demings met with Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw to discuss law enforcement and community engagement programs.

Working to End Sex Trafficking and Reform Sexual Assault Laws

Sex trafficking and sexual assault are abhorrent, and we must continue to strengthen our laws to ensure justice for the victims. As a member of the House Judiciary Committee, we heard recommendations from victims and advocates on how to better protect individuals from sexual assault and sex trafficking, and reviewed the progress of states that adopted the *Survivors' Bill of Rights Act*. We also advanced the *Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act*, which I'm glad to report has now been passed by the House of Representatives.



Rep. Demings participates in a hearing of the House Judiciary Committee.

In the District

Honoring the Life of Mayor Bruce Mount, Sr.

We were deeply saddened last month to learn of the passing of Bruce Mount, Sr., former mayor of the Historic Town of Eatonville. Mayor Mount was an outstanding public servant who put people first.

In Mayor Mount's honor, I entered a statement recognizing his accomplishments into the official Congressional Record. You can read that statement [here](#).



Eatonville Mayor Bruce Mount, Sr., whose life Rep. Demings honored this month with a statement in the Congressional Record.

Protecting Healthcare Centers

Due to congressional inaction, important federal funding is running out for community health centers like Orange Blossom Family Health. Without Orange Blossom, 15,000 Central Floridians could lose healthcare. Community Health Centers (CHCs) save the healthcare system billions of dollars every year, and are often the only source of care for low-income families. 75% of Orange Blossom's patients lack health insurance. 90% of Florida's CHC patients are low-income.

I also had the pleasure of visiting "Om to Home," an inpatient detoxification and residential treatment center in South Apopka. 82% of Community Health Centers, including Orange Blossom, offer mental health or substance abuse treatment. Orange Blossom has helped over 300 people with opioid addiction, and gives vital psychotropic drug therapy. During a national drug crisis, it is shameful that Congress has failed to fund these vital priorities.



Rep. Demings visits the Orange Blossom Family Healthcare Center and speaks with constituents about the importance of community health centers.



Rep. Demings visits “Om to Home”, an inpatient detoxification and residential treatment center located in South Apopka, to discuss strategies to address the opioid crisis.

Working People's Day of Action

I had the privilege to meet with local community leaders and workers, including educators. Hosted by the Orange County Classroom Teachers Association and Florida AFL-CIO, attendees and I discussed the issues important to our educators, and watched “At the River I Stand,” a documentary about the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers strike. I was also thrilled to meet with Orange County School Board Member Pam Gould during a visit to Washington, D.C.



Rep. Demings discusses how to support public school teachers at a community meeting in Orlando.



Rep. Demings discusses the issues faced by students in Orange County with District 4 School Board Member Pam Gould.

Letting LGBT People "Thrive"

This year's "Time to THRIVE" Conference was held in Orlando. The conference, hosted by the Human Rights Campaign, was an opportunity to discuss safety, inclusion and well-

being for LGBTQ youth. By making sure that our schools, homes, and communities are supportive, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to achieve a great future.

Press Releases

Protecting Florida's Families

[Sen. Rubio Endorses Demings-Backed Plan on Guns](#)

[School Shooting Comments from Former Police Chief Val Demings](#)

Protecting Our Elections

[Election Security Task Force Releases Report and Legislation](#)

[Florida Gets "F" on Election Security](#)

Securing Orlando International Airport

[Rep. Demings Joins New Bill to Help Address Staffing Shortages at Orlando Airport](#)

Internship Opportunities

Are you interested in learning the ins and outs of Capitol Hill? Our D.C. office offers great internship opportunities to college students during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. If you are looking to apply, visit our website at: <https://demings.house.gov/intern-congresswoman-demings>.

Congressional Art Competition

Each spring, a nationwide high school arts competition is sponsored by the Members of the U.S. House of Representatives. The Artistic Discovery Contest is open to all high school students in our District. The winning artwork of our district's competition will be displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol. To apply, visit our website at <https://demings.house.gov/services/art-competition>.

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